

From: Jason A. Van Cleve
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/7/01 4:06am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To whomever it may concern,

I am not at all pleased with the outcome of the DOJ case against Microsoft. As a software developer of several years, I have worked with Microsoft products extensively, and I have born witness to many of the unfair and dishonest practices by which the company has been able to step on other software vendors in this race, and over and over again, developers and consumers alike have been hurt by it. Microsoft seems more intent on stifling innovation in other software companies than on innovating anything themselves.

I've felt for some time that the best thing for vendors, consumers and our economy is for Microsoft to be broken up into an OS vendor and an application vendor. I also think it is important that, contrary to the proposal you had previously put forth, Internet Explorer be kept in the "application" division. Microsoft clearly wants to own the Internet itself, control it and exploit it. This would be very bad for all but them, and I believe we must prevent it. Among my concerns here is that if Microsoft's browser is allowed the marketing advantages it has enjoyed so far, eventually no one could justify using a different browser, especially if I.E. were completely integrated into Windows. If few enough people used any alternate Web browsers, Web developers (like me) would eventually be forced to build sites specifically for I.E. In fact, this already happening. Ultimately this would lead to a deficit in any real innovation--something of which Microsoft has proven itself to !

be largely incapable. The Internet has an amazing potential, but unless it is practical for companies to create innovative software to compete with that of Microsoft on the ubiquitous Windows platform, the technology will not be driven as it can and should be.

Microsoft now enjoys something like a permanent home-field advantage. Because most people run Windows, Microsoft is more likely to push their software onto our desktops whether it be good or no. The OS is indeed a separate layer of software from the applications it runs, and so, again, if the market is to have a level playing field, Microsoft should be split up.

But aside from all that, I have seen some of the ways in which Microsoft has succeeded by devious means both in software and in sales, and the fact that this new settlement does nothing practical to penalize them or restrain them from further foul play, is unacceptable. I am for change, and I am for innovation. This settlement will bring neither.

Thank you,

--Jason Van Cleve